

ly, there was no one person but many individuals who dovetailed into the development of the radio of today.

Before 1910, radio was known as “wireless.” The word “radio” was derived from Latin, meaning “radius.” In general terms it conveyed a concept of operating by the radiating of energy. This descriptive term was coined by French physicist Edouard Branly.

Jumping ahead to the 1920s, a high-end parlor radio cost more than a brand new Model T Ford. Many who could not afford a new radio could order plans and parts to build their own. Before speakers had been perfected, headphones were essential to hearing the radio through broadcasts that were often compromised by static and garbled voices. Using headphones also saved on the battery power source.

As speakers were improved, they became a household plug-in to the parlor radio. This brought the rage of entertaining friends and neighbors by having radio parties to listen to concerts, political speeches, and other events in the homes of radio owners.

Radios came in many shapes, sizes, and materials. There was the portable and the floor console and cabinet styles such as the cathedral, the tombstone, and art deco desktop models. Materials used to build radio cabinets included fiberboard, metal, bakelite, wood and plastic.

Before licensing in 1912, all radio was amateur (ham). Later as radio stations began to start up, regulation was enacted for station call letters. Call letters were determined by whether a station was east or west of the Mississippi River. Stations west of the Mississippi were designated with the letter K. Therefore, Denver’s first

station was identified by call letters KLZ. Radio stations established east of the Mississippi have call letters that start with the letter W, such as WGN Chicago.

Soon radio broadcasting introduced advertising and news reports of local interest, and expanded to significant global events. Pioneering broadcasters Lowell Thomas, Edward R. Murrow, and Walter Cronkite became household names.

All this information was further enhanced by Russett’s large display of radios from past decades as well as related radio memorabilia, including magazines, postcards, and advertisements.

Russett captivated the audience with explanations and demonstrations of a spark transmitter and receiver. Crystal radios were explained, and a WWII foxhole radio was shown and described. Among the rarer items on display was a one-of-a-kind homemade, crystal radio from France built inside a jewelry box to hide it from the Nazis during WWII. Various types of vacuum tubes were presented as a visual reference to Wayne’s explanation of vacuum tube theory and its pioneers.

About 30 types of radios from the early 20s to novelty radios from the 80s were exhibited. Today, these radio models of the past have become valued collectibles. For those who have an interest, there are collectors clubs, such as the Colorado Radio Collectors Club, that provide events including vintage voltage shows and radio auctions.

Mark your calendars for Thursday, March 19, when the Palmer Lake Historical Society Monthly History Series

program, Pikes Peak Trolleys, will be presented by Colorado Springs native, historian, and author, John Haney. He will provide streetcar service history and how it affected lives in the Pikes Peak Region. This monthly series is held the third Thursday of the month with doors opening 6:30 p.m., program 7-8:30 p.m., at Palmer Lake Town Hall, 28 Valley Crescent, Palmer Lake, CO 80133. Free admission open to all. Light refreshments served after the program. Info: website at www.palmerdividehistory.org or 719-559-0837.

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Above: Above: Wayne Russett, presenter of the Feb. 20 Palmer Lake Historical Society program Radio And Its Unknown Pioneers with some of his radio collection on display. Photo by Bonni Russett.

High Altitude Nature and Gardening (HANG)

The real bad guys harming wild birds, and dangers of potting soil

By Janet Sellers

For decades, I’ve taught locally about the forest and wetlands habitat as the barometer of our Earth’s health. For my art and nature talks and classes, I go over local habitat issues with doable mitigations at home that have far-reaching results. My art students do detailed research as they participate in the National Junior Duck Stamp design contest, which is grounded in environmental understanding and conservation efforts—our future stewards of the world are indeed our kids.

Birds signal large-scale environmental concerns, but gardeners can be a force to remedy issues, knowing the leading cause of wild bird deaths is traced to human activity. Top on the list are collisions with buildings, windows and towers, followed by predators. Anthropogenic causes of bird mortality also include pesticides and other contaminant sources, and habitat loss. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that millions of acres of habitat are lost due to development, degradation, and forestry practices. These problems can only be mitigated through habitat restoration, and that’s where gardens, by the hundreds, thousands, or millions, can save the day.

“A Summary and Comparison of Bird Mortality from Anthropogenic Causes with an Emphasis on Collisions,” (U.S. Forest Service, W.P. Erickson) shows findings that possibly over 1 billion birds are killed annually in the

United States due to anthropogenic sources, including collisions with human-made structures such as vehicles, buildings and windows, power lines, communication towers, and wind turbines; electrocutions, oil spills and other contaminants; pesticides; predation; and commercial fishing by-catch. Many of these sources would be considered unlawful take under federal law.

Backyard gardens can help

Humans can help change harmful trends with what we plant in our gardens. And, what about the notion of cats and wild birds? The truth is, if they hunt, cats prefer rodents, and are a huge help in controlling that population. Alleycat Allies, a national educational outreach network, reports that there are myriad misconceptions about pet and feral cats and birds. As opportunistic feeders, cats are more likely to go for your garbage, eat bugs, or sit and wait to catch rodents than take their chances chasing birds who can easily spot them and fly away. Cats leave predator pheromones via their footprints, a natural deterrent for vermin. In fact, studies of samples from the diets of outdoor cats confirm that mammals appear three times more often than birds. Birds are consumed only incidentally and not according to a regular feeding pattern.

What everybody can do today

1. Plant native trees, grasses and plants.
2. No pesticides or poisons—use natural, non-toxic.
3. Leave fallen trees if safe to do so—it’s habitat for critters and birds.
4. Drink bird-friendly coffee (Shade-grown organic coffee protects migrator habitats).
5. No single-use plastics trash.
6. Bird feeders—helps in lean times.
7. Suncatchers or decals on windows so birds see it’s not the sky or trees.
8. Talk to everyone you know to do the same. The birds and all of us deserve it.

Potting soil dangers indoors and outdoors

Microbes love dirt! But in using potting soil, beware it’s also a host for pathogens inside the warm, moist bag. Wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly afterward, and while the risk is low for most, cases of lung diseases such as Legionnaire’s disease and others have been contracted via airborne potting soil particles as well as from not washing hands. Inhalation risk is reduced with a mask: Open the bag of potting soil outdoors and pour it out away from the face to avoid airborne particles.

Janet Sellers is an avid ethnobotanist posing as a lazy gardener. Send your garden tips to janetsellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Creative “geni-us” and making memories last

By Janet Sellers

Creativity is a topic I must access daily. For millennia, the Greeks considered creativity in the way we think of the internet today: mysteriously cosmic yet having available information to take in and use—they more or less called it a divine attendant spirit, or muse, from the word *Mousikē*. It was known as the daimon, or daemon, a lesser or divine nature spirit, the tutelary deities guiding the people from the spirit world of the Golden Age.

In researching creativity, I found Penelope Murray’s (Oxford Scholarship) text explaining Western culture generally does not depart from the hitherto standard practice of examining the various components of *mousike* in isolation, but she investigates the significance of *mousike* as a whole in the social, religious, and educational practices of the *polis*. Focusing mainly on classical Athens, her work shows that *mousike* and culture were deeply intertwined in the lives of the ancient Greeks.

The word daemon is derived from Proto-Indo-European *daimon* “provider (of fortunes or destinies),” from the root *da-* “to divide,” resembling the Arabic jinni in their humble efforts to mediate the good and ill fortunes of human life. Zeus sent the daimons out in a benevolent effort to help humans as guardian spirits, “good beings who dispense riches ... [nevertheless] they remain invisible, known only by their acts.” Sounds familiar, as I had to study Proto-Indo-European roots for one of my language degrees, both now ancient history....

The *daimones* of venerated heroes were localized by the construction of shrines, so as not to wander restlessly, and were believed to confer protection and good

fortune on those offering their respects. I do wonder if similar ideas were conferred through the ages in other parts of our world, say, in Native American sacred places and culturally modified tree locations. If so, we might be closer in spirit than we’ve expected via a lens of perceptions through human time.

Given that the Native American tribes such as the Ute have been in our Ta’va (Pikes Peak) region for at least 12,000 years, the Greeks and Romans that heavily influenced the origins of colonial settler culture here in the last several hundred years are relative newcomers in cultural terms. What we have left of Greco-Roman art and sculpture is what they mostly used, the mineral stuff for their mindful efforts into eternity, (stone, mineral paints, or metals) in murals on walls in stones or paint as mediums, but not in living things such as trees as our local Ute and other indigenous peoples on our continent continued to do.

In fact, we certainly have many Native American rock formations with extraordinary imagery created much earlier (and in non-stop, continuous sacred ceremonial relationship) than the Greco-Roman stuff, and ours still communicate to us in real time the creativity and thoughts from back then; in some scholarly research the horse culture is recorded and communicated for at least as far back as 30,000 years on this continent. We have living trees in El Paso County at this moment that are in the forms of mastodons chasing bison. I have personally recorded them in drawings, paintings, and photographs.

The Romans fixated on creativity with outside influ-

ence and called it genius, letting us mortals off the hook for creative responsibility, especially if things went haywire and not up to standards. It would be the genie’s fault if it—the project at hand—failed. In the Renaissance, we made creativity the sole responsibility of the creative artist, and artists began their tragic lives of doubt and debauchery in tandem with production ... that was 500 years of pain to be creative genius instead of to have it ... with no genius or jinni to help!

Art, imagination, and creativity are eternal in human effort. Art plays a role in our memorabilia, in memories, in imagination. Drawings as sketches and clay sculptures as sketches stand in for the real thing in order to move on and materialize the artwork, and to immortalize the idea, then be made into a material form. The word “draw” includes the meanings of attract, provoke, elicit, formulate, portray, all based on imagination and creativity.

Whether we think we draw well or think we don’t, researchers (and artists like me) recommend we draw anyhow to keep our memories available to us. Our selfie culture turns out to have more photos and less mindfulness, with less retrievable, sentient memories of our lives because we use less of ourselves in electronic art moments with screens. You see, the more senses we use, the better we connect to our memories. We stay sharper and can draw on our mindfulness at will.

Janet Sellers is a writer, artist, public speaker and teaches locally. Send her your arts news or arty thoughts: janetsellers@ocn.me

